

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Kiawah Island Municipal Center
Council Chambers
May 10, 2016; 3:00 PM

Minutes

I. Call to Order:

II. FOIA: Notice of this meeting has been published, and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

III. Roll Call:

Present:	Mary Johnson
	David Elliott
	Jim Sullivan
	Jane Ellis
	Lynette Schroeder
	Sandra Williams
	John Leffler
	Robert Simmons
KICA:	Matt Hill
	Dave Achey
KIGR:	Liz King
KINHC:	Justin Core
TOKI:	Jim Jordan
	Aaron Given
	Stephanie Tillerson
Absent:	Jim Chitwood
	Lynne Sager
	Marilyn Olson
ARB:	Amanda Mole
KINHC:	Jack Kotz

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A. Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2016

Mr. Jordan made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2016 Environmental Committee meeting. The motion was seconded and was unanimously approved.

Mrs. Johnson asked for a motion to move Item V. "Chairman's Comments" to follow Item XI. "Committee Member Comments" and to move New Business item B. "Dog Leash Subcommittee Report" to Item E. The motion was moved, seconded and unanimously approved.

V. Old Business

A. Bobcat GPS Study Update

Mr. Jordan reported there were 5 collars (3 females, 2 males) deployed so far, 1 remaining which may not get deployed this year. He reported 2 bobcat dens were found;

↓ March 30 – two 10-day old female kittens near Beachwalker County Park

↓ April 12 – two 10-day old male kittens on Ruddy Duck Ct

B. Winter Marsh Sparrow Banding Update

Mr. Jordan reported the Winter Marsh Sparrow Banding which has been completed. The season spanned from October to May and included 40 banding sessions. He indicated there were 325 new birds captured and 142 recaptured.

Mr. Given reported on Mr. Adam Smith with the Fish and Wildlife Service placing a small transmitter on Salt Marsh Sparrows. The transmitters or tags will allow the birds to be tracked to towers across the Eastern Seaboard as they migrate north.

VI. New Business

A. Budget Subcommittee Report - Funding Guidelines and Process Recommendation

Mrs. Johnson reviewed the proposed draft of the funding review guidelines and process developed by the Budget Subcommittee for the Environmental Department.

Mrs. Johnson noted that included on today's agenda was the last minute review of two Conservancy requests to be funded from the FY 2015-2016 budget. She stated that going forward in FY 2016-2017 the Environmental Committee will review funding applications or proposals and make funding recommendations to Ways and Means Committee for consideration and Town Council for approval.

Mrs. Johnson reminded members of the Natural Resource Element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan; she reviewed the four goals which should be taken in consideration during the discussion of projects in the budgeting process;

1. Complete the Island's development in a way that maintains the Island's environmental integrity and natural beauty and is consistent with the Vision of the Town.
2. Develop and maintain an environmentally sustainable system of parks and open spaces which provide access to the beach and river; preserves, protects and enhances natural resources; and meets the diverse recreational needs of the Town's population.
3. Maintain the existing quality of the natural resources on Kiawah Island, as well as the waters and marine environment surrounding the Island.
4. Maintain and expand public education and outreach programs.

Members discussed the development of the Environmental Department budgeting for FY 2016-2017 which included \$17,500.00 for Environmental Programs and \$2,500.00 for Community Outreach.

Following the review and discussion of questions, Mrs. Johnson requested members review the Guidelines and Recommendations and the Environmental Committee Charter. She requested members submit questions or edits to Mr. Jordan.

B. Environmental Department Budget Update - Review proposed Outreach and Programs line items

Mrs. Johnson presented a detail of individual Wildlife research projects and the Environmental Department budget as proposed in the Town's FY 2016-2017 budget.

Mrs. Johnson discussed support of the Kiawah Conservancy and funding the Conservancy has

given the Town in the past. She stated the configuration of the current of the budget will clarify allocation of expenditures for ongoing projects.

Mrs. Johnson explained the Conservancy's request for funding of \$100,000.00 as it had in the past. This resulted in a line item for \$58,000.00 in addition to \$42,000.00 in research funding already allocated. She noted the Conservancy would have to submit project applications for review, recommendation and approval.

C. Kiawah Conservancy Funding Request – Alligator Documentary

Mrs. Johnson stated the Conservancy is currently filming and producing a documentary film on alligators requesting \$10,000.00 which will include an assistant to work with Dr. Thomas Rainwater. This film will educate visitors and property owners about alligators on Kiawah Island and their importance to the island's ecosystem. Mrs. Johnson noted it addresses one of the Natural Resource objectives from the Town's Comprehensive Plan and reviewed an overview of the study.

D. Kiawah Conservancy Funding Request – Alligator Research Project

Mrs. Johnson, along with Mr. Jordan, explained the Conservancy, in partnership with TOKI, KICA, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), and Clemson University began an alligator study in 2015 focusing primarily on alligator health and physiology. Town Wildlife staff and KICA Lakes Department staff actively participated in this research project. The study is continuing during 2016 for a second year in which approximately 40 alligators will be captured, sampled, and released this year. This proposed study, funded separately by the Town and KICA, would place visual tags on all captured alligators and VHF transmitters would be placed on a subset of 12 alligators and also addresses several Natural Resource objectives of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Ellis made a motion to approve funding of the Conservancy's funding request of \$20,000.00 for the Alligator Documentary and the Alligator Research Project from the FY 2015-2016 Budget. The motion was seconded and was unanimously passed. Member of the Conservancy recused themselves from the vote.

E. Dog Leash Subcommittee Report

Mrs. Johnson stated the subcommittee reviewed the dog leash ordinances from each of the surrounding municipalities. It was determined the Town has the most lenient of the reviewed ordinances. The request is to have dogs off leash for an additional hour before Beachwalker Park opens and after the Parks closes. During the summer months dogs must be on leash. She indicated the challenge would be communicating the exception to the requirement without verbiage, only symbols. Mr. Jordan presented representations of the signage which will be installed on the beach.

Members discussed the issue and the suggestion to implement some kind of permitting that would require an application to allow specific people in a specific area during a specific time that does to apply not anyone else. Members agreed there was no simple solution and there was no way to recommend a change to the current ordinance.

Mr. Elliot made a motion to support not making a change to the current dog leash ordinance and should Town Council chose make a change the Environmental Committee strongly recommends the implementation of permitting system which it still considers a bad alternative. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

VII. Reports:

A. Town of Kiawah Island

BEACH BIRD NESTING AREAS CLOSED

Least terns, American Oystercatchers, and Wilson's Plovers are actively nesting on the eastern end of the Kiawah Beach. The nesting area was closed to all traffic on May 2 and signs were placed around the nesting areas. The area is located on the eastern end of the beach within the 2015 Beach Project work area. The project produced exceptional nesting habitat for these shorebirds.

EARTH DAY

Biologists participated in the Kiawah Conservancy Earth Day event in Night Heron Park on April 22nd.

TURTLE PATROL

Nesting patrol activities began on Monday, May 9th. There have been 2 false crawls so far.

2 Turtle stranding so far this year

- Leatherback on April 11
- Loggerhead on April 28

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

Starts May 18th and will take 10 days to complete.

BULLS BAY NATURE FESTIVAL

Mr. Given to give a Bird Banding Demonstration on May 21st.

HOMESCHOOL FIELD TRIP

Town Biologists hosted a field trip on May 9 for a group of 20 local home school students. The students ranged in age from 4 to 12 and learned firsthand about the Town's bird banding and bobcat research projects. Biologists were able to capture 14 painted buntings, 3 red-winged blackbirds, and 1 cowbird using mist nets and cage traps. This allowed each of the students to hold and observe these beautiful birds up close and personal. Biologists also discussed bird physiology, migration, nesting, and a variety of other topics.

In addition, the students learned about bobcats and their importance to the local ecosystem. Bobcat research efforts were discussed and a field demonstration allowed students to practice using radio-telemetry to locate a hidden bobcat collar. Town biologists are currently working on expanding these types of offerings to our local community and today's class was a good learning experience for both the students and Town staff.

B. Kiawah Island Community Association Land & Lakes Management

Mr. Achey and Mr. Hill reported on the three renovations projects taking place this year;

- ✚ Completion of Flyway Drive
- ✚ Water Feature/Park at intersection of Surfsong and Flyway
- ✚ Redoing of cul-de-sacs

C. Kiawah Island Golf Resort

Ms. King reported on the National Geographic programming that will include the United State of Animals segment done on dolphins would be airing on NetGeo Friday, and Kiawah Bobcats segment had already aired.

Ms. King reported that SCDNR has added a survey monkey for the live input of Diamondback

Terrapin sightings.

D. Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board
None

E. Kiawah Conservancy

Mr. Core reported on upcoming events;

- Sunset paddle trip Wednesday evening
- Reopening of the Conservancy's Maritime Forrest on Thursday morning.

F. Turtle Patrol
None

VIII. **Correspondence:**
None

IX. **Citizen Comments:**
None

X. **Committee Member Comments:**
None

XI. **Chairman's Comments:**

Mrs. Johnson reported on the turtle schedule to be released this afternoon by the Aquarium, the recent *King Tides*.

XII. **Adjournment:**

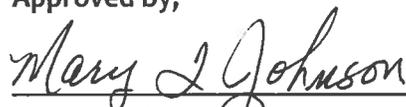
The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Submitted by,



Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,



Mary Q. Johnson, Chairman



Date